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Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-01 VO-03 SCA-01

INSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAJ-01 EB-07 /086 R

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---------- 032856
P R 192038Z NOV 74
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 254903

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS:PFOR, SREF, AU, UR, IS
SUBJECT: TRANSIT OF SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRANTS THROUGH AUSTRIA

1. ON NOVEMBER 14, DR. HEINRICH HAYMERLE, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE AUSTRIAN MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DISCUSSED THE TRANSIT OF SOVIET JEWS WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARTHUR A. HARTMAN AND DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY J.A. ARMITAGE. RESPONDING TO AN AMERICAN SUGGESTION, GIVEN TWO DAYS EARLIER TO VISITING CHANCELLOR BRUNO KREISKY, THAT AUSTRIA APPRISE ISRAEL DIRECTLY OF THE LIMITS OF VIENNA'S TRANSIT CAPACITY, HAYMERLE AGREED THAT HE WOULD TALK TO THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR IN VIENNA UPON HIS RETURN, BUT COMMENTED THAT THE AUSTRIANS WOULD FIND THIS SOMEWHAT
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AWKWARD. HE EXPLAINED THAT AUSTRIA ONLY PROVIDES TRANSIT

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FACILITIES, AND DOES NOT WANT TO DETERMINE OR INFLUENCE IN ANY WAY THE EVENTUAL DISTINATION OF MIGRANTS. IN TALKING TO THE ISRAELIS ABOUT THIS ISSUE, AUSTRIA DOES NOT WANT TO APPEAR TO BE ENDORSING ISRAEL AS THE FINAL DESTINATION FOR ALL THE JEWISH EMIGRANTS-- WHICH IS DEFINITELY NOT THE CASE (ACCORDING TO HAYMERLE, 20 TO 25 PERCENT ELECT GO ELSEWHERE).

2. IN DISCUSSING THE CURRENT FLOW OF JEWISH EMIGRANTS, HAYMERLE REPORTED THAT ONLY SOME 16,000 TO 17,000 HAVE COME THROUGH AUSTRIA THUS FAR THIS YEAR-- A DROP OF APPROXIMATELY 25 PERCENT COMPARED WITH THE 1973 TOTAL. MESSRS. HARTMAN

AND ARMITAGE OBSERVED THAT US STATISTICS SHOW A DECREASE OF OVER 30 PERCENT.

3. EXPLAINING WHY AUSTRIA MUST CALL ATTENTION TO ITS TECHNICAL LIMITS AS A TRANSIT CENTER, HAYMERLE POINTED OUT THAT ONLY ONE INTERNATIONAL TRAIN ARRIVES PER DAY FROM MOSCOW-- AND IT IS ALREADY VERY OVERCROWDED. HE AGREED WITH MR. HARTMAN THAT MOST EMIGRANTS (MORE THAN 60 PERCENT) PREFER TO USE A TRAIN INSTEAD OF A PLANE BECAUSE THEY CAN CARRY MORE BAGGAGE. SIX REGULAR INCOMING FLIGHTS PER WEEK ARE ALSO INVOLVED: THREE AEROFLOT AND THREE AUSTRIAN AIRLINES.

4. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE TENTATIVE PROPOSAL THAT "INDIRECT FLIGHTS" OF JEWISH EMIGRANTS BE FLOWN FROM MOSCOW TO ISRAEL VIA A TOKEN TOUCHDOWN AT VIENNA'S SCHWECAT AIRPORT, HAYMERLE WONDERED WHY VIENNA'S AIRPORT HAD TO BE USED FOR THIS PURPOSE. IN HIS OPINION, EVEN A BRIEF TOUCHDOWN WOULD INVOLVE SECURITY PROBLEMS FOR THE AUSTRIAN AUTHORITIES-- AND MIGHT IN SOME WAY SYMBOLIZE AN AUSTRIAN ROLE IN THE DETERMINATION OF A FINAL DESTINATION FOR THE EMIGRANTS (IN THIS CONNECTION, HAYMERLE AGAIN STRESSED HIS GOVERNMENT'S VIEW THAT ALL TRANSIENTS PASSING THROUGH AUSTRIA SHOULD BE GIVEN COMPLETE FREEDOM TO DETERMINE THEIR ONWARD DESTINATIONS).

5. WHEN ASKED ABOUT THE LENGTH OF THE
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CURRENT PROCESSING TIME IN VIENNA, HAYMERLE REPLIED THAT IT AVERAGED A MAXIMUM OF TWO DAYS. HE EXPLAINED THAT EXPEDITIOUS PROCESSING IS ESSENTIAL TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE LARGEST POSSIBLE TURNOVER.

6. HAYMERLE CONCLUDED HIS PRESENTATION BY STRESSING THAT AUSTRIA INTENDS TO CONTINUE TO DO ITS FAIR SHARE-- BUT BELIEVES THAT SUPPLEMENTAL ROUTES MUST BE ARRANGED AS

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SOON AS POSSIBLE. HE REPEATED THAT VIENNA'S LIMITATIONS ARE NOT CAUSED BY POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS; ONLY TECHNICAL AND SECURITY FACTORS ARE INVOLVED. PURSUANT TO A REQUEST FROM MR. HARTMAN, HE AGREED TO INFORM US ABOUT THE RESULTS OF HIS FORTHCOMING CONVERSATION WITH THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR. INGERSOLL

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